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LETTER DATED 2 JULY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Further to my letter and its enclosures to you of 24 June 1996, circulated as Security Council document S/1996/464, I have the honour to enclose the following documents:

(a) A letter from the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan to the State Minister for Foreign Relations of the Sudan regarding the information available to the Government of Afghanistan that the suspect Mustafa Hamza was seen in the territories under the control of the Taliban movement (see annex I). This letter was referred to in paragraph I.1 (c) of Security Council document S/1996/464;

(b) A press report by the British newspaper The Guardian of 11 May 1996 regarding the involvement of the Government of Eritrea in opening and assisting military camps by Sudanese rebels in its territories to launch military attacks against the Sudan (see annex II). That report was prepared by a correspondent of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service and was referred to in Security Council documents S/1996/358 of 21 May 1996 and S/1996/464 of 24 June 1996, in paragraphs 3 and III (b) respectively. This press publication confirms that the Sudan has been victimized by the hostility of some of its neighbours, contrary to the false allegations against the Sudan.

As regards paragraph III (j) of document S/1996/464 on the relations between the Sudan and Egypt, I have the honour to add that the Presidents of the Sudan and Egypt met in Cairo on 23 June 1996 during their participation in the meeting of the Arab Heads of State and Government. The two Presidents agreed to open a new era in the Sudanese-Egyptian relationship and to establish mechanisms to tackle all the issues pending in their bilateral relations towards further strengthening of those relations in all fields.

The meeting held between the Presidents of the Sudan and Egypt was soon succeeded by meetings of the heads of security forces, then by the Ministers of the Interior in the two countries. These meetings will be continued in the two capitals alternately, while many practical measures have been taken in

implementation of what has been agreed upon. All such actions were meant to affirm positively the seriousness of the Government of the Sudan to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Further, the Ministers of Information of the Sudan and Egypt met in Cairo on 28 June 1996 during their participation in the meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information. The two Ministers agreed on measures to promote bilateral relations in the information and cultural fields.

Moreover, consultations and contacts have been resumed between the two countries in many other fields towards the normalization of relations.

While the peace process in the Sudan has already been started by the signature of the Peace Charter on 30 March 1996 by two rebel factions, joined later by two others, and is making tangible progress, the Sudan is looking forward to the normalization of its relations with its neighbours as an important factor in the establishment of peace in the Sudan and the region as a whole. The keenness expressed by the Sudan in maintaining relations of good neighbourliness will, it is hoped, be reciprocated by its neighbours. The Sudan calls upon Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda to desist from fueling the civil war in the Sudan so that peace prevails in the region and cooperation among its countries can be promoted for realizing the common goals of peace, security, prosperity and development.

I request that the present letter and its enclosures be circulated as a document of the Security Council in reference to Security Council resolution 1054 (1996).

(Signed) Ali M. O. YASSIN
Permanent Representative

Annex I

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 23 May 1996 from the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan addressed to the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan

Some press reports, as you kindly mentioned in your message, stated that the so-called Mustafa Hamza is living in the Afghan province of Konar.

Having been informed of such reports, we directed the relevant authorities to search for and locate the above-named person with the aim of surrendering him to the parties concerned, in compliance with our policy in the Islamic State of Afghanistan to eradicate and denounce all forms of terrorism.

Our investigations indicated that the above-named person is not present in the territories under the control of the State of Afghanistan, but, according to some reports, Mustafa Hamza was seen in the territories under the control of the Taliban movement.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan, while expressing its resolve to prevent and eradicate all terrorist practices and to cooperate in this connection with the international parties concerned, would like to reiterate hereby that it will exert all efforts in order to arrest the above-named person and surrender him to the parties concerned.

Dr. Najeeb Allah LIFRA'L
State Minister for Foreign Affairs

Annex II

Press report published in The Guardian of Saturday, 11 May 1996

SUDAN FACES NEW THREAT FROM EAST

Sudanese rebels, hoping to open a new military front against Khartoum, are training in Eritrea. Peter Biles went to a camp of the Sudan Alliance Forces, led by Brigadier Abdul Aziz Khalid.

Close to the frontier town of Tesenay, in the scorching arid lowlands of western Eritrea, a rebel Sudanese training camp accommodates more than 50 fighters.

The Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF), with the direct backing of the Eritrean leadership, are intent on opening up a new military front in the north of Sudan.

"The aim is to overthrow the regime of the National Islamic Front (NIF) in Khartoum and to build a new Sudan", says Brigadier Abdul Aziz Khalid, a former Sudanese army officer now active in opposition circles in Eritrea.

The rebels, armed with Kalashnikov rifles, anti-tank weapons, and machine guns, are fired up by the name "Turabi" echoing across their parade ground. A picture of Hassan Al-Turabi, the leading Islamic ideologue in Sudan, is pinned over the bull's eye for target practice with AK-47s.

Brig. Khalid insists that there are other Sudanese military training camps in the border region of western Eritrea and that his units have already infiltrated Sudan to engage in small-scale guerrilla activity and provoke mutiny in the Sudanese armed forces. Diplomats in the region confirm one recent incident, in which a Sudanese police station near Kasala was attacked.

The rebels say their members include defectors from the Sudanese military who have brought their uniforms and weapons with them. "Khartoum is our quarter-master", Brig. Khalid jokes.

He denies that Eritrean troops have been helping to train or equip the Sudan Alliance Forces. The Eritrean President, Issaias Afewerki, says training has been provided to some Sudanese opposition groups.

A recent amateur video recording showed the leader of the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), Dr. John Garang, thanking a group of Eritrean soldiers for their assistance in training SPLA forces. The SPLA has been fighting the Khartoum regime since 1983.

"Eritrea will provide any type of support for the people of Sudan. The sky is the limit", said President Issaias. "We believe that it's an obligation on the part of Eritrea because the Sudanese people supported us during our struggle for independence."

Eritrea has not disguised its animosity towards Sudan's Islamic leaders whom it accuses of trying to destabilize the whole region with their fundamentalism.

The Eritrean leadership fears that its hard-won stability as a new independent country is being undermined by attacks in western Eritrea instigated by Khartoum.

Eritrea broke off diplomatic relations with Sudan in December 1994 and this year handed over the empty Sudanese embassy in Asmara to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), an umbrella organization for Sudanese opposition movements from North and South Eritrea that has hosted conferences of the NDA in Asmara in an effort to create a united political front against Khartoum.

While the Sudan Alliance Forces are allowed to operate freely in western Eritrea, the Eritrean military has a significant presence of its own in the area. Tanks and anti-aircraft guns are stationed at Tesenay.

But, in spite of the increasing tension, Eritrea says talk of war is exaggerated. "We are ready to defend ourselves but we don't have any plan to attack Sudan", said the Eritrean army chief of staff, Brigadier Jebrihiwet Zemiceal.

Confirmation that Sudanese rebels are training in Eritrea may well raise the stakes as Sudan finds itself increasingly shunned by neighbours and having to spread its defenses more thinly.

The SPLA has never succeeded in carrying its war into northern Sudan, but a broader coalition of opposition forces rallied against Khartoum along Sudan's eastern flank could make a significant difference. Eritrea firmly believes that the Sudanese military is weak and dispirited and that the days of the NIF are numbered.

"Optimists would say one year ... Pessimists would say two. It's just a matter of time", said President Issaias.

Peter Biles is a correspondent for the BBC World Service.